

361 have failed to learn that there are permanent encampments and kitchen-middens in the heart of the jungles of Great Andaman ; but, since it has been recently asserted in a paper¹ by one of the officers long resident at Port Blair, that, to quote his words, " No tribe of Negritos in the same stage of existence . . . as the Andamanese could exist in the Andaman jungles," it is very necessary to expose his error, for repeated inquiries and personal observation prove the accuracy of the account given by one of the inhabitants of the interior of Middle Andaman, named *Wō-i*, that during the entire year the jungles afford them ample sustenance.²

• 829 2. All the tribes with which we are acquainted possess
184 terms denoting—1, a coastman ; 2, a fisherman ; 3, a creek man ; and 4, a jungle-man ; the two former being applied to those living by the shore, *āryōto*-, and the two latter to those living inland, *ēremtāga*-, whose subsistence depends on the spontaneous products of the jungle, which they all agree in describing as amply sufficient for the support of many times their present population.

184 3. The coastmen are divided into two classes, viz., those who are chiefly employed in constructing canoes, turtle-lines, &c., and those who are engaged in fishing and turtling, but each acquires a certain knowledge of the duties of the other, and also of hunting the *Sus Andamanensis*: in the latter accomplishment, as well as in finding their way through trackless portions of the jungle, they are naturally surpassed by the natives of the interior, who display in these, as in other respects, all the dexterity and intelligence peculiar to savages similarly situated in other tropical regions.³

4. Although these two distinct sections (*āryōto*- and *ēremtāga*-) still exist in a measure among the *bōjig-ngīji*-, as among the people of Middle Andaman, many of their more marked characteristics have become so blended or modified, in consequence of the establishment of the homes, that it is difficult in many cases to determine to which class certain individuals originally belonged. This, it will be understood, is because those of the *ēremtāga*-, who have accompanied parties of the coastmen in

¹ Vide "Proceedings Asiat. Soc. Bengal," July, 1876.

² With reference to the above, Mr. W. T. Blanford, F.R.S., remarked at the meeting at which the paper in question was read, that "it is very difficult for a civilised human being to understand how savages live, or even to conceive what a marvellous variety of animal and vegetable productions, on which savage man, at any rate, can subsist, are to be found in the forests of all tropical regions." He added, that it was his belief that "man could certainly find food wherever monkeys could exist."

³ Vide "Physical Powers and Senses," paragraphs 5 and 6, and "Communications," &c., paragraphs 4 and 6.

fishing and turtling expeditions, at one or other of the homes, 184
for several years, have become sufficiently skilled in these
pursuits to escape the ridicule of the genuine *dryô-to*-, while
these in their turn have made themselves almost as well
acquainted with the interior of the jungles as were the original
occupants, from whom they are, therefore, scarcely distinguish-
able.

5. It will be of interest to note in this place the nicknames 184
employed by the "junglees" and the coastmen when quizzing 829
each other, as they serve to indicate the peculiarities which are
held to be their distinguishing characteristics. The *êremtâ-ga*-
sometimes chaffingly address an *dryô-to*- as *êr-châ-tâknga*-,¹ i.e.,
one who loses his way; *êr-lô'inga-ba*, i.e., one who cannot find
his way in the jungle; or, *ûn-pâg-i'knga-ba*, i.e., one who
cannot follow tracks; while the terms which the coastmen will,
under similar circumstances, employ towards the jungle men
are *ab-mûlwa*- and *gû'gma-tông*-, the first implying a deaf person,
for only the practised ear of an *dryô-to*- can judge of the
distance of a turtle so correctly as to be able to harpoon it in
pitch darkness; the second meaning "leaf of the *Trigonostemon*
longifolius," in allusion to the practice, current among the
inland tribes,² of using these leaves for the cure of fever, but to
which the *dryô-to*- rarely have recourse, as they believe the scent
prevents turtles from approaching a canoe in which there are any
persons who have recently employed this remedy.

6. The intermingling of the members of the inland and coast 184
communities in and near our settlement has naturally resulted
in such a marked modification of many of the characteristics
which distinguish them in their primitive condition that, for
reliable information respecting the same, it is necessary to seek
among the more distant encampments, where similar influences
have not as yet been at work.

7. Amongst those who have now for some years resided at the 184
principal home at Port Blair, there is a young *êremtâ-ga*-, named 115
Wô'i, of the *ôko-jû'wai*-tribe, who, till the end of 1875, had
been living in the depths of the Middle Andaman jungle, and
who then, with a few others of his village, received a message
from *mai'a lîpa*, chief of *bârlâ-kûbûl*-, an encampment on the
coast, inviting them to accompany him in a trip he was about to
make, by way of Port Mouat, for the purpose of seeing the
officer in charge of the home, and procuring some presents from
him. *Wô'i* and his friends gladly availed themselves of the
opportunity of visiting what must have been to them a new

¹ By way of mock respect *mai'a* (i.e., Mr.) is occasionally prefixed to these
epithets when used in this way.

² Vide "Medicine," paragraph 2.

THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

14 most striking of these is ambidexterity. This is the general rule in the Onges and also appears as a normal trait in the primitive peoples of Oceania, America and Asia. Another physical characteristic of the Onges, reported also in Tasmanians and various peoples of Oceania, is the early onset of ageing in both sexes; in the Tasmanians the women are rarely fertile after the age of thirty, and this is also probably the case with the Onges. Unlike the Tasmanians, however, the Onges, though sharing their very black skin colour, have among other physical differences markedly scant body hair. A study of their blood groups by Dr H. Lehmann (see also Mourant) has moreover lent very considerable support to the external physical evidence in favour of a relationship between the Andamanese and the people of Oceania, both past and present.

171
609
62 From the anthropological point of view perhaps the most outstanding feature of all these peoples is that despite their extreme aggressiveness towards outsiders their corporate sense is such that they have no need of leaders to give orders. Rarely are there hereditary leaders; such as they are, their leaders are chosen on the basis of outstanding powers, such as supposed clairvoyance, as in the Andamanese.

174
[829] The Andamanese themselves know nothing of their origins, lost in the mists of time, and it is for us to trace them, working back along the paths cleared by the anthropologist, the ethnographer and the archaeologist. They represent today the survival, almost unchanged, of a culture once to be found all over Oceania, spread thousands of years ago by canoes hardly different from those the Onges use today. They carried the unknown seamen from island to island, bearing with them a way of life which in the Andamans at least was never to change—a point of arrival, rather than of departure. Driven in on themselves by circumstances of geography just as other circumstances now unknown had driven them there originally, they have remained isolated, dwindling in numbers over the centuries, until they were discovered by the modern world. Their reception of outsiders, however they come and whoever they may be, is aggressive; consciously or unconsciously the Andamanese seek to preserve the only way of life they know. And who can be sure they are wrong?

000 No one could deny the demographic decadence of the islanders,